

# FORM B – BUILDING

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION  
MASSACHUSETTS ARCHIVES BUILDING  
220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD  
BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

Assessor's Number USGS Quad Area(s) Form Number

0065000024

Boston N.

767

Town Lexington

Place (neighborhood or village)

Address 27–31 Vaille Ave.

Historic Name Hibbard Bowen/Vaille House

Uses: Present Multi-Family Residential

Original Residential

Date of Construction 1861

Source Lexington Valuation lists

Style/Form Greek Revival/Italianate

Architect/Builder

Exterior Material:

Foundation Brick

Wall/Trim Wood Clapboard

Roof Asphalt Shingle

Outbuildings/Secondary Structures

Major Alterations (with dates)

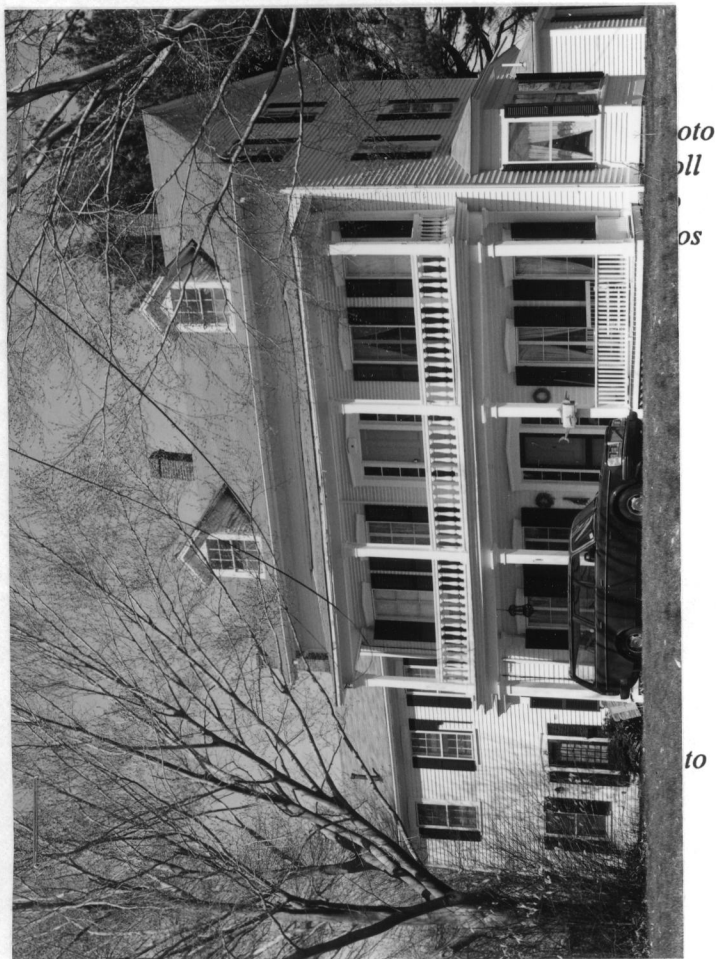
Rear and side additions (dates unknown)

Condition Good

Moved ☒ no ☐ yes Date

Acreage 0.6 A.

Setting On a quiet side street with 20th-century houses



Recorded by Nancy S. Seasholes

Organization Lexington Historical Commission

Date (month / year) April 1998

Follow Massachusetts Historical Commission Survey Manual instructions for completing this form.

## BUILDING FORM

### ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION ☐ see continuation sheet

*Describe architectural features. Evaluate the characteristics of this building in terms of other buildings within the community.*

27-31 Vaille Ave. is one of the relatively few side-gabled Greek Revival/Italianate houses in Lexington that has pedimented window and door surrounds. The house is rectangular with a side ell, 2½ stories, five-by-two bays, and side-gabled with two rear chimneys. The ell is two-stories, four-by-one bays, and side-gabled with a ridge chimney. The house is set on a brick foundation, clad with wood clapboards, and roofed with asphalt shingles. At the west end of the ell is a 1½-story, two-by-one bay addition, the front on a brick foundation and the back on concrete. On its roof is a small shed-roofed addition, perhaps for a staircase. At the rear of the main block is a full-width one-story shed-roofed addition on a concrete foundation, and, at the rear of the ell, a wider full-width one-story shed-roofed addition. There are center entrances on both the first and second stories of the main block, both with pedimented surrounds and full-length sidelights; these entrances are flanked by french doors, which also have pedimented surrounds. A secondary entrance on the facade of the ell has a pedimented surround, too. Windows, other than those on the facade of the main block, are 6/6, 1/1, or 2/2 double hung sash. There are two gabled dormers on the front slope of the roof. Full-width piazzas extend across both the first and second stories on the facade of the main block; both piazzas are supported by square pilastered posts, though on the second story the posts are also chamfered and the railing has turned balusters. On the east elevation of the main block is a one-story three-sided bay on a brick foundation; a similar bay at the east end of the ell is partly covered by a bay at the west end of the main block.

### HISTORICAL NARRATIVE ☒ see continuation sheet

*Discuss the history of the building. Explain its associations with local (or state) history. Include uses of the building, and the role(s) the owners/occupants played within the community.*

Lexington assessors' records indicate that this house was built in 1861 by a Hibbard Bowen. The house was on or near the site of an earlier one that had once belonged to Joshua Reed (1756-1826), probably built in the 18th century. The old house and the large farm associated with it, which extended from Hill St. on the south to north of present Vaille Ave., was acquired in 1840 by Augustus Wellington and in 1852 by Aaron Rice, a Cambridge merchant who presumably rented out the property. Rice apparently took down the old house in 1858 or it may have burned, for it is not listed in the 1859 assessors' records. Rice died soon thereafter, and in 1861 the property was sold to a Timothy Hibbard Bowen of Lexington. Bowen evidently immediately built this house, for he was assessed for a "new house" in 1862. He did not own the property long, however, selling it in 1863 to Sylvester Bowman, a Boston distiller who, in turn, sold it to Frederick O. Vaille in 1886.

Vaille named the property Beechwood Farm, raised sheep, and was interested in agricultural innovations. A notice in the April 6, 1888, *Lexington Minute-man* invited all interested to come to his farm to view a "unique horse mower called the Eureka," which cut a wider swath, had larger power wheels, and simpler gearing than most mowers then in use, and also left the hay untrampled so that it could cure quickly. Vaille was also very religious; in 1892 he conducted a meeting at Hancock Church for "recalling

### BIBLIOGRAPHY and/or REFERENCES ☐ see continuation sheet

Direct Tax of 1798.

Hudson, Charles. *History of the Town of Lexington*. Revised and continued to 1912 by the Lexington Historical Society.

Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1913. 1: 396, 499, 500.

*Lexington Minute-man*, 6 April 1888, 8 April 1892, 29 July 1892.

Lexington Valuation Lists. 1853-1869.

Middlesex Registry of Deeds. Deeds. Cambridge, MA. 265: 367; 394: 491; 638: 563; 864: 536; 989: 332; 3069: 341.

Sileo, Thomas P. Notes on F. O. Vaille. In possession of Thomas P. Sileo, Chelmsford, MA.

☐ Recommended for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. *If checked, you must attach a completed National Register Criteria Statement form.*

# INVENTORY FORM CONTINUATION SHEET

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION  
MASSACHUSETTS ARCHIVES BUILDING  
220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD  
BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

Town  
Lexington

Property Address  
27-31 Vaille Ave.

Area(s) Form No.

|  |     |
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|  | 767 |
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## HISTORICAL NARRATIVE (continued)

straying souls" and sued Mark Meagher, who was developing the land northwest of Beechwood Farm, for disturbing the Sabbath (see Area AJ). Vaille's large barn burned in 1890 in one of Lexington's notable fires. Just after the turn of the century Vaille moved to Colorado; his extensive Lexington holdings were acquired by the Vaille Farm Trust, whose stockholders were Lexington residents, divided up, and sold off. For a time this house was reportedly a country hotel.